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of this divine result is apparent. Fashioned and furnished by the Creator's hand, it gathered into its narrow limits the characteristic features of the habitable zones, in order that the Bible issuing from thence might, in all its imagery and illustrations drawn from nature, be the world's book. And its people, first isolated until trained, were then brought into contact with race after race, in order that the Bible, revealed through their instrumentality, might speak to the universal heart of man.—*Dr. G. W. Moorehead, in the Evangelical Repository, Nov. 1883.*

✧EDITORIAL✧NOTES.✧

Textual Criticism.—Textual criticism is generally supposed to be a work which only specialists can do. This supposition is correct. The subject is one for which few minds have the necessary ability. Perhaps no other department of biblical study presents more difficulties, or requires greater judgment and discrimination. So great, indeed, is the skill required, and of so special a character is the work, that few have either courage or inclination to undertake it. There are many who yet suppose the vowel-system of the Hebrew text to be of equal authority with the consonantal portion of the text. This, however, has been shown to be a mistaken view, and while by scholars the Massoretic system of vowel-notation is regarded as by far the most valuable commentary ever written on the Old Testament, it is not supposed to be infallible. There are, without question, many words, the present reading of which is unsatisfactory. Nor can we claim as absolutely correct, the present consonant-text. Here changes are needed to a far less extent, but it is certain that mistakes have been made by copyists and that errors have crept into the text. Has any other book been handed down from antiquity faultless in this respect? Is it not wise, therefore, when we consider the Authorship of the book, its purpose, its contents, to endeavor by all the means within our power to obtain as correct a reading as possible? Of those who are so indifferent in reference to the exact meaning of scripture as not to seek this meaning from the original source, this question need not, of course, be asked. But by what means are these corrections to be made? Where may we obtain information on this point? Scholars are accustomed to enumerate five sources from which "criticism derives all its aid in ascertaining the changes that have been made in the original text of the Bible, and replacing authentic readings excluded by them." These are:

1. *The Ancient Versions*, the more important of which are the Septuagint, the Greek versions of Aquila, Theodotion, Symmachus, etc., the Chaldee Targums, the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, the Peshito or old Syriac version, and the Vulgate. These translations or versions were made *before* the introduction of the vowel-points, and are consequently of great value; their authority, though not absolute, is weighty, whenever there are found variations between them and the Hebrew text.

2. *Repeated Passages*, of which there are many more in the Old Testament than one might at first suppose. The Books of Chronicles, running parallel with the Books of Samuel and of the Kings, are noteworthy under this head. So also there may be mentioned the double record preserved of certain laws and poems, of which a comparison of Psalm XVIII. with 2 Sam. XXII., and of Psalm XIV. with Psalm LIII. will give an illustration.

3. *Quotations* from the Old Testament, in the New Testament especially, but likewise in Rabbinical writings. The former class is one of equal importance and difficulty. To the latter class there has probably never been given sufficient attention.

4. *Manuscripts*; but since all written copies of the Old Testament, now extant, have been made since the Massoretic revision, very few various readings can be found, and the aid from this source is not of the greatest value.

5. The last source, and in many cases, the most fruitful, is that of *critical conjecture*. This source, evidently, should be used only as a last resort, and then sparingly.

It is clear that only specialists can do this work, but, certainly, every true Bible student should make use of the results which the specialist may work out. In this, as in every department of work, it is a duty to acquaint ourselves with those results which able and talented men have attained in the conscientious performance of their work.

The Study of Hebrew in Colleges.—The Colleges of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and of the United Presbyterian Church furnish instruction in Hebrew to those members of the Senior Class who may desire it. This study, in the academical institutions of other denominations in this country, is the exception. In these denominations, it is the rule. The question arises, Are these denominations, in this respect, behind the times, or ahead of the times? It is true that long ago in Harvard, Hebrew was taught as a College-study, but that was when the majority of Harvard's students were preparing for the ministry. How does the matter stand to-day? 'Is it wise, is it practicable to make this study an optional one in the College? Are not the denominations referred to doing for those about to enter their ministry a work of great value? This further notice of the subject is suggested by the following letter from one well-known both east and west:—

DEAR MR. EDITOR:—In the November Number of THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT I read, with great pleasure, an Editorial on the study of "Hebrew in Colleges." In the Lafayette College, Easton, Pa., with which I have the honor to be connected, Hebrew has been, for many years, an elective study, on the part of the Senior Class, who intend to study for the ministry. On entering upon my duties, at the opening of the Middle Term, last year, I organized a class in Hebrew that pursued the study with great enthusiasm. The President of the College and other members of the faculty frequently remarked that their progress and attainments, during the short period of three months, were very remarkable. All the members of the Class, with the exception of one, had the ministry in view. That one was actuated by literary and philological motives. I left, at the end of the Middle Term, when the Class constituted itself a Hebrew Society, for the purpose of prosecuting the study until the close of the College year. Judging from the character of the young men, I may safely say that their zeal did not flag. I intend to organize another class at the opening of next term, about the first of January. I hope, Mr. Editor, that you will endeavor, as far as you are able, to bring the importance of the study of Hebrew before the faculties of the Colleges throughout the land. Yours very respectfully,

CHARLES ELLIOTT, 496 Dundas St., London, Ontario.